

Local Trivia

Murder Plot

■ The crowd of avengers met, as arranged, on the Thursday night. All were dismissed save seven of the shrewdest and most trusty.

SECTION C

History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, DECEMBER 1

About the Author



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

Morehead Memories:

People & Places

Rowan County War Part I

By Jack D. Ellis
Special to The Morehead News

By Edward T. Moran
of Morehead, Rowan
County, Kentucky
(pseudonym of Cora
Wilson Stewart)

The Nov. 7 bitterly contested election in three counties in Florida is reminiscent of a bitterly contested election in Rowan County Aug. 10, 1882.

Although the results of the elections were not nearly as important as the one that resulted in tragedy and bloodshed that it became known as the Rowan County War.

Twenty-two people died during the three years of the feud. Also, years later, many of the men involved in the feud met a violent, mysterious and bizarre death.

The story of the Rowan County War was published in the World Wide Magazine Vol. IX No. 52, Aug. 1902. The author was listed as Edward T. Moran of Morehead, Rowan County, Kentucky.

That name was a pseudonym used by Cora Wilson Stewart in some of her early writing because it was easier for a man to be published.

Also, I'm sure even at the time (1902) there was still some of the bitter anger that

best means of averting trouble a pistol-shot rang out, and answering ones promptly resounded through the air, proclaiming the anxious throng who had collected to discuss measures of peace and compromise that their plans were thwarted and that the threatened trouble had already begun.

Police officers hurried to the spot, where they found two men lying dead and one wounded.

All were of the Republican Party - two prominent partisans while the other was an innocent bystander, who had committed no offense save cast his vote for the party of his choice.

While the excitement over the shooting was at its height the result of the election was announced, giving victory to the Democratic Party.

This infuriated the Republican leaders still more. They were certain that their murdered men had been the victims of partisan feeling, and they clamoured for the detection and punishment of the guilty parties.

The entire county was soon in a commotion. The women and children trembled with fear and apprehension, while the men folk collected in crowds in every place throughout the county and discussed the result of the



resistance. He was hurried to the county jail a few yards distant and in less than half an hour a strong guard had been placed around the building by a Republican marshal - ostensibly for the purpose of preventing the prisoner's escape, but believed by the Democrats to be for his protection against mob violence.

Next day Martin was hastened to Winchester, a "bluegrass" town beyond the border of the feudal section.

None too soon was this

state of affairs. Shepherd waited for his prisoner at the entrance.

Not a word of greeting was exchanged between them, and after parting from the jailer Shepherd, accompanied by the prisoner, walked rapidly to the railway depot, reaching it just as the east-bound train came puffing in.

They boarded the train and were whirled away through "bluegrass" country. Darkness enveloped everything, and an

occasional twinkling light in a distant farm-house was the only thing to be seen. Shepherd was taciturn, and seemed steeped in gloomy meditation; he was apparently very careless of his prisoner, but as a matter of fact, his eye never once wandered or relaxed his vigilance.

When they reached the town of Mt. Sterling, some twenty miles from Farmers, he rose with a nonchalant air, and with a voice of studied carelessness said, "Come Martin, let us go into the smoker and take a puff."

It was at the hour of eleven that Shepherd and his prisoner entered the smoking car and seated themselves, Shepherd placing himself on the side next to the aisle.

Just at this hour I was hastening from my home in Farmers to the bedside of a dying friend.

In order to reach the place quickly I took an old deserted road, and when hurrying along about a mile from the village I had just soft sounds of galloping horses' feet arrested me and alarmed me, for I was aware of the great excitement that prevailed.

Accordingly, as a measure of precaution, I jumped behind the stump of a gigantic tree to await the passing of the horsemen. As they drew near,

they slackened their speed and finally stopped and dismounted within 10 feet of me. I was almost paralyzed with fear, thinking that my presence would be discovered, but I soon found that they had only stopped to review some plan.

I recognized each voice, and in a few moments was made acquainted with all the details of the terrible deed to be committed that night. They discussed the location of Shepherd and his prisoner in the car. There were six of them, and I gathered three would "hold up" the engineer while the others would locate the prisoner, shoot the lights out, and then attack him.

Shepherd was to dodge beneath the seat to avoid injury to himself.

After repeated instructions and careful cautions they remounted, and, hearing the whistle of the train in the distance, put spurs to their horses and galloped on.

More next week

• Jack Ellis' next article will conclude Cora Wilson Stewart's account of the mysterious deaths of those involved in the murder.

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smoldered among the factions. Cora Wilson would have been 8 years old at the time. She claims she witnessed this event. She did live in Farmers where the event happened. Less than a month after, she claimed to have witnessed the event.

The family moved to Elliottville but her detailed story written in the first person 19 years later clearly is written by someone who was actually there.

Perhaps she was with her physician father whom she often accompanied on house calls when she saw a murder being planned and was afraid for her life.

This is her story:

Kentucky feuds have long been celebrated in song and story, but no feud has ever been so expensive to the state, so demoralizing to the people and so disastrous to life and property as the terrible "Rowan County War," which had its beginning and its end in the little town of Morehead. Blood flowed almost as freely as water, and both the county and the state officials were powerless to prevent the great loss of life.

Many are the thrilling narratives that have been written concerning this feud, but the greatest tragedy of the conflict, and doubtless the most mysterious ever enacted on Kentucky soil, has for years been locked securely in the bosom of this writer.

All the participants having now gone to their rest, however, and secrecy no longer being necessary, I have decided to give it to the public in all its strange and terrible detail.

On the 10th day of August 1882, the county election was held in Rowan County.

At Morehead, the county seat, were gathered some of the most desperate men in the district.

Excitement ran high, for everybody realized that the election meant more than the triumph of one section over the other and a division of party spoils, but that to the winning party it would mean great loss of life.

While the more law-abiding citizens were discussing the

election, the crime, and possible apprehension of the murderer.

Suspicion pointed to Floyd Tolliver, a hotel proprietor in the town of Farmers, eight miles from the county seat, but this suspicion was based solely upon his well-known party prejudices and the fact that he was close to the scene of the murder when officers arrived.

He was a man of prepossessing appearance, tall and well-built, and of a jovial temperament. It seemed preposterous to his friend to think that he was capable of such a crime.

For months nothing happened, and one day in the February following, Floyd Tolliver went to purchase supplies for his hostelry. It being the regular county court day many citizens were there, some to attend to their claims and business and others for pleasure.

Conspicuous among the latter was John Martin, champion of the Republican Party and a well-known bully and desperado of Eastern Kentucky. Meeting Tolliver in the street that day about noon he greeted him pleasantly and invited him to step across to the saloon at the opposite corner and join him in a social glass.

Though there had been some bitter feeling between them, Tolliver, being a good-natured man, forgot all past differences and accepted the invitation, with no thought of impending danger.

While drinking and talking together the shooting was mentioned, and a hot dispute ensued, whereupon Martin, true to a premeditated plan, shot Tolliver dead.

The muffled sound of the pistol reached the officers at the courthouse, and they were on the spot almost before the smoke had cleared away.

Martin was discovered in the middle of the floor with his pistol in his hand, complacently marking on it the notch which chronicled his ninth victim.

The officers secured the doors and windows and, seeing that escape was impossible, Martin surrendered without

in a dark and lonely ravine, known as "Gloomy Hollow," two miles from the town, were gathered twenty men who had determined to break into the jail and kill the murderer of their friend Tolliver.

Although temporarily baffled, these self-constituted avengers were not beaten, and their leader - one Shepherd - arranged another meeting in the Hollow the following Thursday.

Meanwhile Martin, in the custody of the sheriff and accompanied by a devoted and sorrowful wife, was speeding away toward the peaceful town of Winchester. His friends now busied themselves with schemes for his escape.

They met, and plotted how they might secure his freedom. The other faction, however, were occupied with a plot, intricate and dreadful, for the immediate execution of a guilty man.

The crowd of avengers met, as arranged, on the Thursday night. All were dismissed save seven of the shrewdest and most trusty, the others being conciliated by the assurance that they would be called again when the plot was complete. Plans were then submitted and discussed, but none found universal favor until Shepherd unfolded his scheme.

It was a simple idea and one easily executed, but was ultimately to bring ruin and untimely death to each of the participants.

Shepherd's plan was as follows: an order was to be forged, purporting to be from the county judge to the jailer at Winchester, ordering him to deliver Martin to the bearer of the order. Shepherd - who was then marshal of the town of Farmers - would present this order and take the prisoner. Once in his custody, Martin would never escape. The other six conspirators were to board a train at Farmers and "hold up" the train while the others shot Martin.

Shepherd duly presented himself at the Winchester Jail on the Saturday night following and delivered the forged order to the jailer, who had no suspicion to the real

Local Trivia

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SECTION C

History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, DECEMBER 8

About the Author



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

Morehead Memories:

People & Places

Rowan County War Part II

By Jack D. Ellis
Special to The Morehead News

This is an account of one facet of the bloody Kentucky feud known as the Rowan County War. It was published in World Wide Magazine in 1902. The author was listed as Edwin T. Moran of Morehead Rowan County Kentucky. That name was a pseudonym for Cora Wilson Stewart, who founded the moonlight schools in Kentucky. She writes about witnessing the planning of a murder during the Rowan County War.

She waited 19 years after the event to write about it because she was afraid for her life. This is her story about what happened to the six men who planned and carried out a violent act of vengeance.

Her story continues:

I was rooted to the spot with horror, there was no time to save Martin from his fate, for the train was almost due. I saw that I was powerless to do anything, and too frightened to think coherently, I hurried on as fast as my trembling limbs would carry me to the bedside of my friend. No minister being present, I prayed and soothed him in his dying hours. I was in a state of agitation and spent a night in indescribable horror.

Next morning the country

I will now proceed to set forth the strange fate which befell the seven conspirators.

Julian Welch, a man of unusual brilliancy of mind and nobility of character, a much-respected citizen of Farmers, had been persuaded to join the guilty seven through a misrepresentation of purpose. They convinced him that the killing of Martin was the only way of ending hostilities without many years of bloodshed and strife.

He was drawn into the plot believing the act to be one of patriotism and of justice. He forged the fatal order, and a short time afterwards realized he was a murderer, guilty of a dastardly crime. Being a man of tender conscience, he brooded until life became unbearable, and finally sought to drown his remorse in headlong dissipation. He finally came to an untimely end on the first anniversary of the night when he aided and abetted in the murder of John Martin. He died raving in delirium, beseeching the watchers again and again to "burn the order; burn the order." They, of course, did not understand him.

We will now follow the career of William Colton, a man who had served for year as one of the county's best officials. He continued to live



Lexington Insane Asylum, and there he remained until the day of his death some months later. I have since heard from officials who accompanied him relate that when the train reached the town of Farmers he became so violent that it required the assistance of four passengers to hold him down. No one could account for the agitating effect of that quiet, peaceable little village upon the diseased mind; but to one acquainted with the case, as I was, it seemed perfectly clear.

Three years had now

But he was never destined to reach his home alive. He lingered so long in town that his family, becoming alarmed at his prolonged stay, sent a boy of fifteen in search of him. The night was one of inky blackness. The boy rode on until he almost collided with a riderless horse standing still in the road. He held his lantern higher so that he could see the animal, and with a start recognized his father's saddle horse! His father was

hanging from the stirrup covered with blood, and quite dead.

The boys pitiful cries aroused several persons, and soon a large crowd gathered and conveyed the body home. Morning had dawned by this time and the coroner was soon upon the ground making investigation. By bits of clothing and traces of blood they traced the victim back to the old homestead of John Martin, but what occurred at that spot still remains a mystery. The coroner's verdict was that Andrew Tolliver came to his death by being thrown from his horse and dragged along the road, the horse's fright being occasioned by something or someone just in front of the old, deserted Martin homestead.

Meanwhile John Shepherd was sojourning in the Kentucky Penitentiary, having been sentenced to imprisonment there for a term of twenty-one years for killing an officer in Mount Sterling, who attempted to arrest him for some misdemeanor. While he was in the penitentiary he conducted himself so meritoriously as to get into the good graces of the warden, and to secure greater liberty than other criminals of his class. He pretended to become converted, and was a devout

worshiper at the prison chapel. His good conduct, together with the untiring efforts of his friends, secured his release after an imprisonment of only five years. He returned to his native county apparently a changed man.

While in prison he met a beautiful woman who visited the prison Sabbath school and taught the Bible. They were associated much together, and she was one of the most untiring in the effort to secure his release, and ultimately married him.

Shepherd took a contract to oversee timber job in "Gloomy Hollow," and one day parted fondly from his wife to go and assign the work to the laborers, assuring her that he would return in a few hours. But he never came back. The day passed and he came not. Night came on and the woman watched anxiously, and still he did not make his appearance. The next day passed and the next night, and the poor wife was frantic. She had made but few friends, and could appeal to no one.

The next morning, however, just as she had succeeded in interesting the police-officials and had got them to start in search of him, the news came

See WAR on C-2

clang with the news of John Martin's death: how six masked men had held up the train at Farmers; how three appeared in the doorway of the smoking car, and extinguishing the lights as if by magic, fired one with accord at the manacled man. Their aim was excellent - Martin dropped mortally wounded.

Meanwhile, the frightened occupants of the carriage scrambled wildly for the door. Others from the next carriage rushed up, and a scene of wild confusion ensued. The lamps were again lighted, but there was no trace of the masked men; they had disappeared as suddenly and as silently as they came. The terrified passengers assisted in trying to minister to Martin, who was still living, and when the train reached Morehead he was carried to the nearest inn and a messenger dispatched to carry the sad tidings to his father and mother.

The messenger found a band of desperate men assembled at the Martin's house planning the release of their leader on the morrow, but their plans could avail him nothing now. The bearer of evil tidings broke the news as best he could. Grief and consternation were depicted on every countenance, and with one accord Martin's supporters hurried to the inn, to find the dying man breathing his last. He was able to utter but one word - "Revenge;" but these wild children of the feud country understood, and swore vengeance in his dying ears.

Martin was buried two days later. But what of his murderers? There was not the slightest clue to their identity. I dared not reveal my knowledge of the crime, for it only meant certain death to me and more bloodshed in the county. Besides, how could I substantiate my story against seven men's denial? So the crime and its perpetrators have always remained a mystery.

Thereafter, terrible tragedies followed each other in quick succession, and although I noted them with increasing horror, my lips perforce remained sealed.

in Morehead for some months after the Martin tragedy, and quietly pursued his avocation, which was the practice of law. But the fear of discovery lay heavy upon him, and he moved back farther into the mountains, to Martinsburg, thinking thereby to ensure his safety.

Soon after he settled there a terrible crime was committed in the locality and suspicion pointed to Colton. He was arrested, tried and convicted upon purely circumstantial evidence. The judge, as if inspired by Fate, fixed the day of the second anniversary of John Martin's death as the date of his execution! The convicted man was duly hung on the appointed day, although loudly protesting his innocence to the last moment.

Three weeks later the real murderer, being no longer able to bear the weight of a guilty conscience, confessed to the murder and thus declared Colton's innocence. But it was too late! William Colton had gone to answer for his share in the tragedy at Farmers.

Some months later it was whispered that one of Morehead's most prominent citizens had become mentally imbalanced. For days he would walk and talk incessantly, and when unable to secure a companion in his rambles would hold conversations with some imaginary person. This mood was followed by the strictest seclusion. He was gloomy and taciturn, and would see none of his friends or acquaintances. His family kept the matter suppressed for weeks, until finally he conceived a maniacal hatred for one of his grown sons, addressing him always as "John Martin," and attempting to murder him whenever he came in sight. Family, pride and filial love finally succumbed to fear, and his family had his sanity tested in court.

Imagine, if you can, the feelings of the writer when summoned on the jury on the jury to try this man for lunacy on the same fatal day of the year that John Martin was shot! It was the third anniversary.

The man was sent to the

passed, each bringing its terrible result to some one of the guilty band. I had in the meantime lost trace of John Wheeling, one of the chief plotters in the gang, and one whom I remembered as the most noisy when discussing their plans on that fateful night. I chanced one day to pick up an Ohio paper, and was stricken speechless with astonishment to find the picture of John Wheeling - a prisoner awaiting trial for the murder of his father-in-law! I followed the proceedings of the trial very carefully. No motive could be assigned for the deed, but John Wheeling was given a life sentence, and on the fourth anniversary of his midnight ride to Farmers he donned a convicts garb and gave up home and freedom for a crime of which he stoutly declared his innocence and for which no just cause or reason has ever yet been found!

Hitherto I had not connected the catastrophes which befell these men with the murder of John Martin, but now I began to note the mystery of it all, and found myself looking forward to the 3rd day of March with excitement and dread. The fifth anniversary, a beautiful day for the season of the year, passed off without any evil occurrence, and I felt greatly relieved. But night came with another misfortune wrapped in its gloomy curtains.

Andrew Tolliver was a prosperous farmer living some five miles distant from the county seat. He had sold the products of his farm a few days before, and came in on the 3rd of March to deposit the year's earnings in the safe of a merchant friend in town, there being no bank nearer than thirty miles at that time. He seemed unusually cheerful and jolly that day, meeting his fellow farmers along the road with a cheery greeting and passing jokes with all. "Andrew seems lively this morning," remarked one; "he must have had a good sale this year."

Tolliver lingered in town beyond his wonted stay, chatting with different friends. At dusk, however, he bade them "goodbye" and galloped out of the town towards home.

Local Trivia

Made in Hollywood?

■ Library director, script writer talk about feud that later became known as the Rowan County War. Many versions of the story have been repeated.

SECTION C

History

About the Author



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

Morehead Memories:

People & Places

A movie (almost) about the Rowan County War

By Jack D. Ellis
Special to The Morehead News

"Call to remembrance the former days." (He. 10:32)

In November 1973, this writer received a telephone call from advertising executive Bob Dial from Atlanta, Georgia. At that time I was the Director of Libraries at Morehead State University. The telephone conversation went something like this:

"Dr. Ellis, my name is Bob Dial and I'm in the advertising business in Atlanta. As a child growing up in Atlanta, my father (from Kentucky) used to tell me about a man named Boone Logan who was involved in a bitter feud between two families in Rowan County. The feud later became known as the Rowan County War. Do you know anything about it?"

Library Director and Script Writer discuss feud.

I said, "Yes I know something about the feud." We then discussed what we knew about it for about 30 minutes over the phone, and he said he hoped to write a movie script about the feud and sell it to a Hollywood producer by the name of Bob Clarke. Mr. Dial then came to Morehead to met with me and we discussed the history of the

Well, to back up a little, while they were shooting "Moonrunners" I got to drinking with Clarke one night and told him about this story involving Boone Logan and the Rowan County War. I had heard the story from my father who had gone to school back in the thirties down at Berea, and graduated from Eastern. I didn't remember the details of it, but told Clarke it sounded like there was a movie in it, and I'd be glad to put it together for his next project. One of the actors in "Moonrunners" was Jim Mitchum, Robert Mitchum's son. After I had told the story, what I knew of it, to Clarke, he in turn, told it, on another occasion when liquor was flowing to Jim Mitchum, who liked it, and passed it along to his dad, Robert Mitchum. By now, it resembled that parlour game where you tell someone a joke, and they pass it on, and you see what kind of garbled version comes out at the end. Robert Mitchum like whatever he heard (I've been unable to reconstruct that version of it) and told his son to tell Clarke to tell me to go ahead. Are you still with me? So, Clarke gave me some money as an advance, and I came up there to do my research. The real story, as I

Teacher's Scotch, what the hell, it's his money. So I sat down to write a story about a guy who killed 21 people. A story based on a story I told, over drinks to Bob Clarke in the summer of 1973, which he in turn, told over drinks, to his father, Robert Mitchum. With a lot of drinking going on, no telling what the story was about. I made one up out of whole cloth, kept the name Boone, changed his last name to Taylor, moved it to West Virginia and up to 1910, and made it about the minefields.

Two months passed. Clarke by now is shooting a western called "King of the Mountain" in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

"Great treatment," he tells me on the phone from the Las Cruces Ramada Inn. "One of the investors in the movie I'm making now is on the board at Random House, and he thinks it would make a terrific novel. Can you make it a novel?"

"I guess so."

"Okay, this is definitely my third picture for UA. We'll shoot it next summer in West Virginia."

"Summers in West Virginia are always fun," I tell him.

"Terrific. Start the novel. We'll work a promotion with Random House, jack up the price, then you write the screenplay, and we'll all get rich."

"Nice speaking with you," I tell him.

That was in October. I am



A violent feud between two families in Rowan County between 1884-1887 became wildly known as the "Rowan County War."

Rowan County War which was quite different from the version he had heard from his father. I shared some of my research with him and he returned to Atlanta.

We talked over the phone several times during the next few months and he would tell me of the trials and troubles of trying to sell a movie script to a Hollywood producer. About a year later I wrote Mr. Dial a letter and asked him how the proposed Rowan County War movie was progressing. The following letter was received from him in December 1974, outlining the classic account of a Hollywood producer's disdain for historical accuracy.

Burton, Campbell and Kelley, Inc.
Advertising
1800 Peachtree Road, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30309
Dec. 6, 1974

Dr. Ellis:

Sorry for the delay in answering your letter, but things have been pretty hectic around here. To answer your question succinctly, exactly nothing has happened to the Rowan County War script. But, to proceed to make a short answer long, this is a "Hollywood nothing," so I thought you might be interested in what happened.

The producer is a man named Bob Clarke. He is a former attorney from North Carolina who found a story a couple of years ago about moonshining and hunting with bow and arrow. He asked me in the summer of 1973 if I wanted to write a screenplay for him, and, since I didn't really care for the story, and, at the time, I doubted his ability to raise serious money, I didn't write it. I was half-right. I still don't like the story, but damned if he didn't scuffle around and come up with the financing. So they shot the thing, called it "Moonrunners," down south of Atlanta in the late fall of 1973. It took them six months to edit the thing and get a distribution agreement from United Artists, but it finally got into release the first of November of this year. (1974)

found out from you, bore little resemblance to what we had been bandying about. However, I thought the real story was much better, and so I wrote a thirty page treatment based very closely to the facts about the Rowan County War as you reported them to me.

Two months passed! One thing I learned about Clarke was that, at any given moment, he has several balls in the air at once, and communications with him are difficult. Following the "Moonrunners" he moved his family to Malibu and set up shop as a full time producer, signed a three picture deal with United Artists, and then called to tell me he didn't like the story I sent.

"What happened to the guy who killed 21 people?"

"There was no guy who did that."

"The story you sent me is about some lawyer."

"Yeah, well, you see Boone Logan was a lawyer."

"Nobody wants to see a show about a lawyer."

"I guess that explains why Perry Mason was such a flop."

"I want you to rewrite this thing, and I think I can sell it to UA, but go back to the original story you told me that I told Mitchum."

"What I wrote was the original story. What I told you was something somebody made up."

"So make one up."

Well, I thought, after sufficient quantities of

now 33 pages into a novel called "Boone's 21," that has nothing to do with Boone Logan or Morehead, or Rowan County, or anything else I did on that trip back in the spring when were so kind to let me look over your material.

I hope you go ahead with your book about the Rowan County War. I think it's a great story, and should be done. If I had the money I'd buy the rights to it myself and find a producer who liked it. In the meantime I'm in the situation of being something of an indentured servant to one Bob Clarke, a former lawyer who doesn't like stories about lawyers, and who, at this moment is probably sipping Tequila somewhere in New Mexico and complaining about writers who insist of some kind of devotion to historical fact.

Please keep in touch. If anything else happens I'll fire another baroque letter.

Best wishes for the holidays.

Sincerely,
Bill Dial

The writer contacted Mr. Dial two years later and learned they did produce the movie called "Boone's 21" — but it had not yet been released. (I'm not sure it ever was) and the setting was the West Virginia Mine Fields. He changed the last name to Taylor and the time was 1910. So much for historical accuracy, and so much for a movie about the Rowan County War.

2101

SECTION C

Local Trivia

Murder Plot

■ The crowd of avengers met, as arranged, on the Thursday night. All were dismissed save seven of the shrewdest and most trusty.

SECTION C

History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, DECEMBER 5

About the Author



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People & Places

Rowan County War

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By Edward T. Moran
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The Nov. 7 bitterly contested election in three counties in Florida is reminiscent of a bitterly contested election in Rowan County Aug. 10, 1882.

Although the results of the elections were not nearly as important as the one that resulted in tragedy and bloodshed that it became known as the Rowan County War. Twenty-two people died during the three years of the feud. Also, years later, many of the men involved in the feud met a violent, mysterious and bizarre death.

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While the excitement over the shooting was at its height the result of the election was announced, giving victory to the Democratic Party. This infuriated the Republican leaders still more. They were certain that their murdered men had been the victims of partisan feeling, and they clamoured for the detection and punishment of the guilty parties.

The entire county was soon in a commotion. The women and children trembled with fear and apprehension, while the men folk collected in crowds in every place throughout the county and discussed the result of the election, the crime, and possible apprehension of the murderer. Suspicion pointed to Floyd Tolliver, a hotel proprietor in the town of Farmers, eight miles from the county seat, but this suspicion was based solely upon his



by the Democrats to be for his protection against mob violence.

Next day Martin was hastened to Winchester, a "bluegrass" town beyond the border of the feudal section. None too soon was this precaution taken, however, for in a dark and lonely ravine, known as "Gloomy Hollow," two miles from the town, were gathered twenty men who had determined to break into the jail and kill the murderer of their friend Tolliver. Although temporarily baffled, these self-constituted avengers were not beaten, and their leader - one

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When they reached the

town of Mt. Sterling, some twenty miles from Farmers, he rose with a nonchalant air, and with a voice of studied carelessness said, "Come Martin, let us go into the smoker and take a puff." It was at the hour of eleven that Shepherd and his prisoner entered the smoking car and seated themselves, Shepherd placing himself on the side next to the aisle.

Just at this hour I was hastening from my home in Farmers to the bedside of a dying friend. In order to reach the place quickly I took an old deserted road, and when hurrying along about a mile from the village I had just soft sounds of galloping horses' feet arrested me and alarmed me, for I was aware of the great excitement that prevailed.

Accordingly, as a measure of precaution, I jumped behind the stump of a gigantic tree to await the passing of the horsemen. As they drew near, they slackened their speed and finally stopped and dismounted within 10 feet of me. I was almost paralyzed with fear, thinking that my presence would be discovered, but I soon found that they had only stopped to review some plan.

I recognized each voice, and in a few moments was made

acquainted with all the details of the terrible deed to be committed that night. They discussed the location of Shepherd and his prisoner in the car. There were six of them, and I gathered three would "hold up" the engineer while the others would locate the prisoner, shoot the lights out, and then attack him.

Shepherd was to dodge beneath the seat to avoid injury to himself. After repeated instructions and careful cautions they remounted, and, hearing the whistle of the train in the distance, put spurs to their horses and galloped on.

I was rooted to the spot with horror, there was no time to save Martin from his fate, for the train was almost due. I saw that I was powerless to do anything, and too frightened to think coherently, I hurried on as fast as my trembling limbs would carry me to the bedside of my friend. No minister being present, I prayed and soothed him in his dying hours. I was in a state of agitation and spent a night in indescribable horror.

Next morning the country rang with the news of John Martin's death: how six masked men had held up the train at Farmers; how three

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event. She did live in Farmers where the event happened. Less than a month after, she claimed to have witnessed the event. The family moved to Elliottville but her detailed story written in the first person 19 years later clearly is written by someone who was actually there. Perhaps she was with her physician father whom she often accompanied on house calls when she saw a murder being planned and was afraid for her life.

This is her story:

Kentucky feuds have long been celebrated in song and story, but no feud has ever been so expensive to the state, so demoralizing to the people and so disastrous to life and property as the terrible "Rowan County War," which had its beginning and its end in the little town of Morehead. Blood flowed almost as freely as water, and both the county and the state officials were powerless to prevent the great loss of life.

Many are the thrilling narratives that have been written concerning this feud, but the greatest tragedy of the conflict, and doubtless the most mysterious ever enacted on Kentucky soil, has for years been locked securely in the bosom of this writer. All the participants having now gone to their rest, however, and secrecy no longer being necessary, I have decided to give it to the public in all its strange and terrible detail.

On the 10th day of August 1882, the county election was held in Rowan County. At Morehead, the county seat, were gathered some of the most desperate men in the district. Excitement ran high, for everybody realized that the election meant more than the triumph of one section over the other and a division of party spoils, but that to the winning party it would mean great loss of life.

While the more law-abiding citizens were discussing the best means of averting trouble a pistol-shot rang out, and answering ones promptly resounded through the air, proclaiming the anxious throng who had collected to

well-known party prejudices and the fact that he was close to the scene of the murder when officers arrived.

He was a man of prepossessing appearance, tall and well-built, and of a jovial temperament. It seemed preposterous to his friend to think that he was capable of such a crime.

For months nothing happened, and one day in the February following, Floyd Tolliver went to purchase supplies for his hostelry. It being the regular county court day many citizens were there, some to attend to their claims and business and others for pleasure. Conspicuous among the latter was John Martin, champion of the Republican Party and a well-known bully and desperado of Eastern Kentucky. Meeting Tolliver in the street that day about noon he greeted him pleasantly and invited him to step across to the saloon at the opposite corner and join him in a social glass.

Though there had been some bitter feeling between them, Tolliver, being a good-natured man, forgot all past differences and accepted the invitation, with no thought of impending danger. While drinking and talking together the shooting was mentioned, and a hot dispute ensued, whereupon Martin, true to a premeditated plan, shot Tolliver dead. The muffled sound of the pistol reached the officers at the courthouse, and they were on the spot almost before the smoke had cleared away.

Martin was discovered in the middle of the floor with his pistol in his hand, complacently marking on it the notch which chronicled his ninth victim. The officers secured the doors and windows and, seeing that escape was impossible, Martin surrendered without resistance. He was hurried to the county jail a few yards distant and in less than half an hour a strong guard had been placed around the building by a Republican marshal - ostensibly for the purpose of preventing the prisoner's escape, but believed

Shepherd - arranged another meeting in the Hollow the following Thursday.

Meanwhile Martin, in the custody of the sheriff and accompanied by a devoted and sorrowful wife, was speeding away toward the peaceful town of Winchester. His friends now busied themselves with schemes for his escape. They met, and plotted how they might secure his freedom. The other faction, however, were occupied with a plot, intricate and dreadful, for the immediate execution of a guilty man.

The crowd of avengers met, as arranged, on the Thursday night. All were dismissed save seven of the shrewdest and most trusty, the others being conciliated by the assurance that they would be called again when the plot was complete. Plans were then submitted and discussed, but none found universal favor until Shepherd unfolded his scheme. It was a simple idea and one easily executed, but was ultimately to bring ruin and untimely death to each of the participants.

Shepherd's plan was as follows: an order was to be forged, purporting to be from the county judge to the jailer at Winchester, ordering him to deliver Martin to the bearer of the order. Shepherd - who was then marshal of the town of Farmers - would present this order and take the prisoner. Once in his custody, Martin would never escape. The other six conspirators were to board a train at Farmers and "hold up" the train while the others shot Martin.

Shepherd duly presented himself at the Winchester Jail on the Saturday night following and delivered the forged order to the jailer, who had no suspicion to the real state of affairs. Shepherd waited for his prisoner at the entrance.

Not a word of greeting was exchanged between them, and after parting from the jailer Shepherd, accompanied by the prisoner, walked rapidly to the railway depot, reaching it just as the east-bound train came puffing in. They boarded the

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appeared in the doorway of the smoking car, and extinguishing the lights as if by magic, fired one with accord at the manacled man. Their aim was excellent - Martin dropped mortally wounded.

Meanwhile, the frightened occupants of the carriage scrambled wildly for the door. Others from the next carriage rushed up, and a scene of wild confusion ensued. The lamps were again lighted, but there was no trace of the masked men; they had disappeared as suddenly and as silently as they came. The terrified passengers assisted in trying to minister to Martin, who was still living, and when the train reached Morehead he was carried to the nearest inn and a messenger dispatched to carry the sad tidings to his father and mother.

The messenger found a band of desperate men assembled at the Martin's house planning the release of their leader on the morrow, but their plans could avail him nothing now. The bearer of evil tidings broke the news as best he could. Grief and consternation were depicted on every countenance, and with one accord Martin's supporters hurried to the inn, to find the dying man breathing his last. He was able to utter but one word - "Revenge;" but these wild children of the feud country understood, and swore vengeance in his dying ears.

Martin was buried two days later. But what of his murderers? There was not the slightest clue to their identity. I dared not reveal my knowledge of the crime, for it only meant certain death to me and more bloodshed in the county. Besides, how could I substantiate my story against seven men's denial? So the crime and its perpetrators have always remained a mystery.

Thereafter, terrible tragedies followed each other in quick succession, and although I noted them with increasing horror, my lips perforce remained sealed.

I will now proceed to set forth the strange fate which befell the seven conspirators.

Julian Welch, a man of unusual brilliancy of mind and nobility of character, a much-respected citizen of Farmers, had been persuaded to join the

dastardly crime. Being a man of tender conscience, he brooded until life became unbearable, and finally sought to drown his remorse in headlong dissipation. He finally came to an untimely end on the first anniversary of the night when he aided and abetted in the murder of John Martin. He died raving in delirium, beseeching the watchers again and again to "burn the order; burn the order." They, of course, did not understand him.

We will now follow the career of William Colton, a man who had served for year as one of the county's best officials. He continued to live in Morehead for some months after the Martin tragedy, and quietly pursued his avocation, which was the practice of law. But the fear of discovery lay heavy upon him, and he moved back farther into the mountains, to Martinsburg, thinking thereby to ensure his safety.

Soon after he settled there a terrible crime was committed in the locality and suspicion pointed to Colton. He was arrested, tried and convicted upon purely circumstantial evidence. The judge, as if inspired by Fate, fixed the day of the second anniversary of John Martin's death as the date of his execution! The convicted man was duly hung on the appointed day, although loudly protesting his innocence to the last moment.

Three weeks later the real murderer, being no longer able to bear the weight of a guilty conscience, confessed to the murder and thus declared Colton's innocence. But it was too late! William Colton had gone to answer for his share in the tragedy at Farmers.

Some months later it was whispered that one of Morehead's most prominent citizens had become mentally imbalanced. For days he would walk and talk incessantly, and when unable to secure a companion in his rambles would hold conversations with some imaginary person. This mood was followed by the strictest seclusion. He was gloomy and taciturn, and would see none of his friends or acquaintances. His family kept the matter suppressed for weeks, until finally he conceived a maniacal hatred

on the same fatal day of the year that John Martin was shot! It was the third anniversary.

The man was sent to the Lexington Insane Asylum, and there he remained until the day of his death some months later. I have since heard from officials who accompanied him relate that when the train reached the town of Farmers he became so violent that it required the assistance of four passengers to hold him down. No one could account for the agitating effect of that quiet, peaceable little village upon the diseased mind; but to one acquainted with the case, as I was, it seemed perfectly clear.

Three years had now passed, each bringing its terrible result to some one of the guilty band. I had in the

meantime lost trace of John Wheeling, one of the chief plotters in the gang, and one whom I remembered as the most noisy when discussing their plans on that fateful night. I chanced one day to pick up an Ohio paper, and was stricken speechless with astonishment to find the picture of John Wheeling - a prisoner awaiting trial for the murder of his father-in-law! I followed the proceedings of the trial very carefully. No motive could be assigned for the deed, but John Wheeling was given a life sentence, and on the fourth anniversary of his midnight ride to Farmers he donned a convicts garb and gave up home and freedom for a crime of which he stoutly declared his innocence and for which no just cause or reason

has ever yet been found!

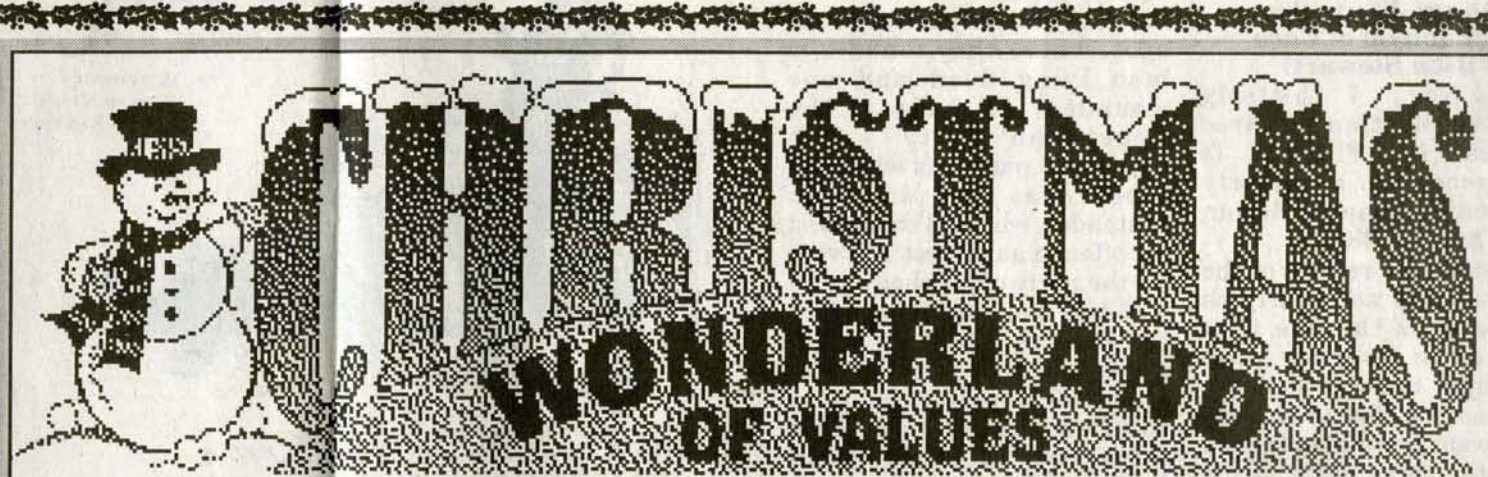
Hitherto I had not connected the catastrophes which befell these men with the murder of John Martin, but now I began to note the mystery of it all, and found myself looking forward to the 3rd day of March with excitement and dread. The fifth anniversary, a beautiful day for the season of the year, passed off without any evil occurrence, and I felt greatly relieved. But night came with another misfortune wrapped in its gloomy curtains.

Andrew Tolliver was a prosperous farmer living some five miles distant from the county seat. He had sold the products of his farm a few days before, and came in on the 3rd of March to deposit the year's earnings in the safe of a

merchant friend in town, there being no bank nearer than thirty miles at that time. He seemed unusually cheerful and jolly that day, meeting his fellow farmers along the road with a cheery greeting and passing jokes with all. "Andrew seems lively this morning," remarked one; "he must have had a good sale this year."

Tolliver lingered in town beyond his wonted stay, chatting with different friends. At dusk, however, he bade them "goodbye" and galloped out of the town towards home. But he was never destined to reach his home alive. He lingered so long in town that his family, becoming alarmed

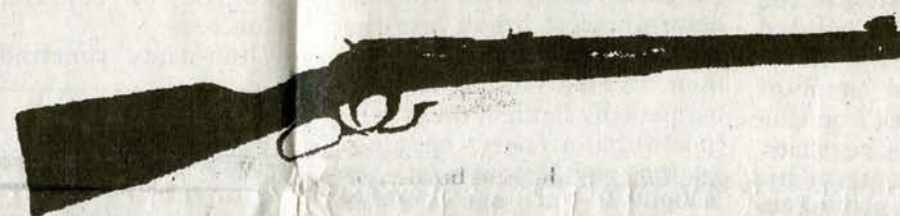
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Wa From C-2

at his prolonged stay, sent a boy fifteen in search of him. The night was one of inky blackness. The boy rode on until he almost collided with a fearless horse standing still in the road. He held his lantern higher so that he could see the animal, and with a start recognized his father's saddle horse! His father was hanging from the stirrup covered with blood, and quite dead.

The boys pitiful cries aroused several persons, and soon a large crowd gathered and conveyed the body home. Morning had dawned by this time and the coroner was soon upon the ground making investigation. By bits of clothing and traces of blood they traced the victim back to the old homestead of John Martin, but what occurred at that spot still remains a mystery. The coroner's verdict was that Andrew Tolliver came to his death by being thrown from his horse and dragged along the road, the horse's fright being occasioned by something or someone just in front of the old, deserted Martin homestead.

Meanwhile John Shepherd was sojourning in the Kentucky Penitentiary, having been sentenced to imprisonment there for a term of twenty-one years for killing an officer in Mount Sterling, who attempted to arrest him for some misdemeanor. While he was in the penitentiary he conducted himself so meritoriously as to get into the good graces of the warden, and to secure greater liberty than other criminals of his class. He pretended to become converted, and was a devout worshiper at the prison chapel. His good conduct, together with the untiring efforts of his friends, secured his release after an imprisonment of only five years. He returned to his native county apparently a changed man.

While in prison he met a beautiful woman who visited the prison Sabbath school and

taught the Bible. They were associated much together, and she was one of the most untiring in the effort to secure his release, and ultimately married him.

Shepherd took a contract to oversee timber job in "Gloomy Hollow," and one day parted fondly from his wife to go and assign the work to the laborers, assuring her that he would return in a few hours. But he never came back. The day passed and he came not. Night came on and the woman watched anxiously, and still he did not make his appearance. The next day passed and the next night, and the poor wife was frantic. She had made but few friends, and could appeal to no one.

The next morning, however, just as she had succeeded in interesting the police-officials and had got them to start in search of him, the news came he was found. The man who found him was, according to the story, out hunting stray hogs, and when he reached the darkest part of "Gloomy Hollow," hearing some swine moving, he turned out of the path and proceeded in that direction. After going about 30 feet he was horrified to see the dead body of a man. It proved to be no other than Shepherd - stone dead, murdered!

When the officers set to work to find the assassin, they found only the spot where beaten down bushes had afforded him a place of concealment. The underbrush was broken and the earth trampled hard, showing that the murderer had been in ambush for several days, and that he knew the route traveled daily by his victim. It was evident to me that some of John Martin's avengers had been at work, although years had passed and the "Rowan County War" was supposed to have ceased and all the old enmity had been buried. It was but another mystery that baffled those who would have made it clear, while fear kept silent those who could have explained it. They moved the body of Shepherd into the old courthouse at Morehead.

While the watchers sat and discussed the terrible crime in whispers someone mentioned another crime in years gone by, and one of them said: "Do you remember the night when John Martin was murdered?"

"Yes," answered another. "But why?"

"I was trying to think of the date, that is all," he said.

"It was the 3rd day of March in the year 1883," said his companion.

"Good Heavens!" returned the first speaker. "If Jack was killed three days ago, as the doctors testify, he must have been murdered on the 3rd of March!"

They talked long on the subject and all agreed that it was a strange coincidence, for Shepherd was known to have delivered the forged order which secured the handing over of Martin. A strange coincidence indeed, but still none saw in this strange crime, as I did, the hand of the avenger.

No one was ever indicted for the murder of Jack Shepherd. The murderer has not been apprehended to this day, and no one ever dared to advance so much as a theory concerning who the person might be, lest they themselves share Shepherd's fate.

Only one of the conspirators was now living. He was a man of wealth and influence, and Providence seemed to smile upon him and bless him beyond the lot of his neighbours. He was a model citizen, and enjoyed a happy home and success in every undertaking.

"Surely," I thought, "this man will escape the Nemesis?"

Still, during the last days of February, I found myself looking forward to the 3rd of March with nervous dread. The nearer that day approached, the more apprehensive I became. My nights were troubled and filled with nightmares, and the days with gloomy retrospective thought and still gloomier anticipation. I had stood silent and powerless, watching these many tragedies growing out of one, until, under the burden of

an awful secret, I felt almost as guilty as the original seven conspirators.

Could I not in some way warn Gerald Walsh, or could I not, by keeping silent watch over him, save him from the hand of this invisible and inexorable Nemesis? I could not dispel the gloomy thoughts that filled my mind, and sometimes imagined that the succession of tragedies had almost turned my brain. When I looked at the calendar the date March 3rd seemed magnified to my distorted vision, and sometimes I seemed to see a red circle around the date.

When the 2nd day of March closed and night came on I could no longer bear the suspense, but resolved to go on the morrow, whatever the cost,

and warn Gerald Walsh. The night passed slowly, every moment seeming an hour, and when morning dawned I arose, looking worn and haggard. Without waiting to partake of our morning meal, I caught my horse and galloped to Morehead. When I reached the village I met two men, and, seeing that they were excited, stopped to inquire the cause.

"Gerald Walsh is dead," answered one. "He committed suicide last night!"

"What for?" I asked, horrified beyond expression at the news.

"He seemed cheerful as usual until yesterday, when his wife noticed that he appeared depressed."

"Did he leave no message?" I inquired, anxiously.

"Yes; he left a note pinned

to his pillow, saying, 'It is better to go out and meet your fate than run from it and be overtaken,' but no one understood what he meant."

But I understood - and like a flood of light the explanation broke in upon me. There had been another silent spectator to this ghastly series of catastrophes - one who was more vitally interested than myself. Reviewing the dread and horror I had suffered for days past I shuddered at the thought of the ordeal of apprehension through which this wretched man must have passed.

My life-long regret is, and ever will be, that my lips remained sealed until this long drawn-out tragedy had reached its bitter culmination.